

(WASHINGTON, D.C.) – Congressman Herger introduced legislation today to extend by three months the law authorizing the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) program. The TAA program provides training, income support, and other benefits to workers who have been adversely affected by international trade. The TAA program expires on September 30, 2007.

In introducing the legislation, Congressman Herger stated, “I am concerned that there are too few legislative days left for the House and Senate to fully consider and pass legislation to reauthorize and reform TAA before it expires in September. While I understand that TAA program benefits could continue if the law expires, a three-month extension would remove any doubts that the program and its important training and other benefits would continue uninterrupted, while allowing time for Congress to seek to craft bipartisan legislation reauthorizing and reforming the program.” He added, “The TAA program is very complicated and should be improved and reformed in various ways. There are also a range of proposals to expand the program that need to be discussed and carefully considered, including how Congress would pay for such expansions under the “pay go” rules. I am analyzing these options and I hope to see Chairmen Rangel’s and Levin’s TAA reform proposal shortly, as time is running out.”

On June 14, 2007, the House Ways and Means Committee held a hearing on TAA and on helping American workers adapt to a global economy more generally. As the Ranking Member of the Committee’s trade subcommittee, Congressman Herger played a leading role in the hearing. As he stated then, “TAA can be a valuable tool for getting people retrained and back to work quickly, providing income support in the interim.” At the same time, he pointed out, “To me, TAA’s annual cost of nearly \$1 billion means that any expansion must be done in a cost conscious manner focusing on actual results, particularly because less than 3 percent of long term job loss is due to trade.” In light of this, Congressman Herger concluded his remarks at the hearing by stating, “TAA is only one tool in our policy arsenal to deal with unemployment, and we also should consider practical, responsible, fiscally sound, comprehensive, and effective ways to help more Americans re-enter the workforce as quickly as possible.”

In addition to working to reauthorize and reform TAA, Congressman Herger is working with Ways and Means Ranking Member McCrery and their Republican colleagues on broader efforts to help all American workers adjust to globalization. Congressman Herger stated, “We look forward to also working with our Democratic colleagues on the Committee, on a bipartisan basis, to seek to reform the TAA program and other federal programs and policies in a cost-effective manner so as to help all hard-working Americans adapt in today’s changing U.S. and global economy.”